

THE GREEN CALDRON

A Magazine of Freshman Writing



Marilyn Murray: <i>"Madame Curie" by Eve Curie</i>	1
Rosemary Presson: <i>Herman Melville and "Moby Dick"</i>	3
Jayne Groves: <i>Her Sunday Afternoon</i>	10
Nancy Gray: <i>War Marriages</i>	11
Roberta Schmaling: <i>My Queen—Cleopatra!</i>	14
Gordon Robertson: <i>Departure and Return</i>	18
John T. Wells: <i>Meteorite!</i>	20
Dorothy Kelley: <i>Questions Minus Answers</i>	23
Arnold Rustin: <i>The Fourth Hour</i>	24
Bernard Miller: <i>My Town Speaks</i>	27
Dorothy Knaphurst: <i>The Laughter of the Water</i>	28
Private Richard Rogers: <i>Spring</i>	29
104 Library	31
(Material written in Rhetoric I and II): <i>Rhet as Writ</i>	32

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Madame Curie by Eve Curie

MARILYN MURRAY

Rhetoric II, Theme 3, 1943-1944

ON JULY 4, 1934, AT SANCELLEMOZ, MADAME CURIE, first celebrated woman scientist, mother and only supporter of two children, and Chief of Research Work at Paris, slipped away from earthly work to join her husband, Pierre. Eyes dimmed by long hours of research in poorly lighted rooms; rough hands, calloused and burned by radium; and a deafness which was gradually growing worse, spoke of the years of poverty, hardships, and toil that had been hers. Odd that it should have been her beloved radium—the same radioactive element which she and her husband had discovered—that had eventually stilled those hands and taken a truly great mind from the scientific world.

What were her thoughts in those last moments when she hovered between life and nothingness? Were they of her childhood home in Warsaw—the house on Freta Street which was continually kept in a state of turmoil by four healthy youngsters? Were they of her lovely mother, who had been suddenly snatched from her family—a victim of tuberculosis—or of her father's face marked by drudgery and overwork? Perhaps she saw herself, Marie Sklodowska, a fair child with light, clear eyes and Polish hair and skin, standing before the bookcase and gazing in wonder at the scientific apparatus which lay on the shelves. These were, no doubt, the most carefree days of her entire life—days of school lunches of bread, an apple, and a pair of Polish sausages wrapped in a cloth bag; of the Saxony Gardens and Lozienki Park, where she had passed many hours; of games of cross-tag, battledore, and shuttlecock; of *David Copperfield*; of boarding school uniforms of navy-blue serge; of made-over dresses, two a year; of poverty; of teaching for small sums during vacation—all overshadowed by German oppression. For these were the years when Poland's very soul was being crushed and trampled by German rule.

Or did her thoughts dwell on the years of skimping and saving, helping to support her father, saving for her own education, and sending her older sister to the university in Paris? Was she remembering the glorious day when she first read the sign, "French Republic—Faculty of Sciences, first quarter—Classes will begin at the Sorbonne on November 3, 1891," and realized a dream come true—entering the great college herself? Or was it the memory of living on bread and tea and forty francs a month?

Was it Pierre, her husband? Was it Pierre, whose death in 1906 brought such a shock that she never fully recovered? Was it grave, tall Pierre Curie,

with his clothes hanging loosely, a rough beard, peaceful eyes, and a careless grace? Or was it the Pierre they had carried home that rainy day in April, clothes caked with mud and dried blood?

No, it was none of these, dear to her heart as they were.

"... She did not pronounce the name of any living person. . . . The great and the little worries of her work wandered aimlessly in her marvelous brain and were expressed by inconsecutive phrases. . . . And, staring fixedly at a teacup in which she was trying to stir a spoon—no, not a spoon, but a glass rod or some delicate laboratory instrument:

"'Was it done with radium or with mesothorium?'"

It was radium, her precious radium, which occupied her thoughts. This was her life, her work, her love.

Henri Becquerel's discovery that certain "uranic" salts radiated light fascinated the Curies. Where did the energy come from? Immediately Marie decided to use this as a subject for her doctor's thesis.

It was not easy. Lack of equipment and space to work handicapped her. But in April of 1898 she announced the "probable presence in pitchblende ores of a new element." Together she and Pierre studied this probability. Physicists believed there was an error. Yet the Curies remained convinced that they were not mistaken. Forty-five months later, Marie succeeded in preparing a decigram of pure radium. Radium officially existed.

Then suddenly fame was theirs. Newspapers, headlines, pictures, councils, banquets, honors, speeches were thrust at them from all sides. But the Curies revolted. It kept them from their work. There was so much work waiting to be done. They scorned publicity in all its forms—it was seldom that Madame Curie donned her one and only evening dress.

Instead they remained in their small inadequate laboratory, penetrating together the mysteries of this strange discovery. Together—until the fateful day in 1906 when Pierre's death abruptly ended the partnership. It was not as might have been expected—bronchitis—but an accident, a slippery pavement, excited horses, the driver's inability—anyone's—to hold them.

But Marie was not stopped. Pierre had once said, "Whatever happens, even if one has to go on like a body without a soul, one must work just the same." And go on she did. She accepted the position as Pierre's successor—Chief of Research Work in Paris. She supervised the building of a fully equipped laboratory, their dream. Through the war she remained in Paris with her work. She looked after and supported their two children, Eve and Irene. Until the last, she carried on her endless work, never complaining, never giving up, never losing faith, until the day when, "She had drawn away from human beings; she had joined those beloved 'things' to which she had devoted her life, and joined them forever."

Herman Melville and *Moby Dick*

ROSEMARY PRESSON

Rhetoric II, Theme 9, 1942-1943

HERMAN MELVILLE WAS AMAZINGLY PROPHETIC when he wrote to his close friend and editor Evert Duyckinck, that "all ambitious authors should have ghosts capable of revisiting the world, to snuff up the steam of adulation, which begins to rise strengthening as the Sexton throws his last shovelful on him—Down goes his body and up flies his name. . . ."¹ The letter was written after Melville had achieved some success as a writer, but he was to experience forty years of neglect during his life, and thirty years of oblivion after his death. Now, after nearly a century, fame (which he considered the most evanescent of all vanities) is Melville's. He is now acknowledged as one of the foremost of American writers. People all over the world have become conscious of the author of *Moby Dick*, and an ever-increasing number of biographies and sketches have been written about him.

All writers agree that Melville's best powers were concentrated in *Moby Dick*, which takes its place among the world's great literature as a masterpiece of fiction. *Moby Dick* seemed to mark the height and the terminus of Melville's career as an author. Writers have been hard pressed for explanations of his sudden seclusion, and some have even ventured the theory of insanity. But his long seclusion was rather one of disappointment, failure, and renunciation. Visualize this idealistic traveler's reactions to apparent failure, crushed hopes, and a friendless and penniless future. The world starved and ignored him, failure silenced his genius, and as a result he withdrew into an isolation of mortified pride and silence.

Upon his return from the South Seas in 1844, Melville achieved some success with *Typee* and *Omoo*. True, it was a success of scandal for his attacks on the missions, but he was encouraged to continue writing. He as yet had no doubt about his own powers, and the spirit of creation was strong within him. Into the great theme of *Moby Dick*, therefore, he poured his best efforts of genius and strength. He forgot his reserve and included every emotion of his own spirit in the writing. On it he placed a great deal of hope, but all his efforts and hopes seemed in vain. *Moby Dick* was received with very little respect and a great deal of derision. Melville must have been sadly disappointed that even in England, where his first works had been so well received, the newspapers were severely critical of his masterpiece. England's *Examiner* deplored that a "writer of such imagination and mastery

¹Minnigerode, Meade, *Some Personal Letters of Herman Melville* (New York, 1922), p. 8.

of language should have committed himself to such an extravaganza." The *Athenaeum* denounced even Melville's style and his "mad rather than bad English. Mr. Melville has to thank only himself if his book is flung aside as so much trash."² Small wonder, then, that the author of "so much trash" should be silenced by disappointment and failure.

The failure of *Moby Dick* culminated a life of disillusion. Melville's normally happy childhood was interrupted by the death of his father when Melville was thirteen. Since Allan Melville left his family in an impoverished state it was necessary for Herman to leave school and begin to work. Until he was seventeen he worked at various jobs, living for the most part with relatives and never succeeding in finding a true path for himself. In *Redburn* he says that "sad disappointments in several plans which I had sketched for my future life; the necessity of doing something for myself, united to a naturally roving disposition had now conspired within me to send me to sea as a sailor." And again, "I had learned to think much and bitterly before my time; all my young mounting dreams of glory had left me; and at that early age I was as unambitious as a man of sixty."³ So it was that at the age of seventeen he entered the merchant service, both for the sake of being independent and of satisfying a desire to see other parts of the world. In that first voyage Melville's illusion about the kindness of life was destroyed, even while the comfortless ship, the unscrupulous captain and crew, and the hardships made a man of him. He was disillusioned, too, when he discovered that Liverpool, the fabulous city of his dreams, was exactly like New York.

His return only widened the gap between aspiration and fact—he still had no path in life. He tried teaching, and struggled to write, but at the age of twenty-one he joined the crew of a whaler in an escape from the perplexities of manhood and in the desire for isolation. Poverty seemed always to urge him to seek happiness abroad. In the four years of absence he saw much of the world of men, white and black, and above all he gained the faculty of contemplation, still unwarped and unsophisticated. Within two years after this voyage he had published *Typee* and *Omoo*, and was famous as the man who had lived among cannibals. But he was to discover that the income from his books was far short of his reputation, as well as of the necessities of life. He was never to know financial security.

That Melville was disillusioned about his parents is proved in the autobiographical *Pierre*. His mother was a proud, cold woman who rebuffed his love; indeed, she seemed actually to hate him, particularly after the death of his father. He sought happiness in the illusion of love, but because of his idealization he was disappointed in marriage. Elizabeth Shaw Melville was a loyal, noble wife, but between them there was never real understanding.

His one remaining illusion was the belief in the possibility of a friend-

²Freeman, John, *Herman Melville* (New York, 1926), p. 130.

³Melville, Herman, *Redburn*, quoted by Freeman, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

ship that might satisfy his need for understanding and sympathy. When he became acquainted with Nathaniel Hawthorne, his admiration of the man led him to believe that here was such a friend—a kindred soul. In reality, Hawthorne's pessimism was from a lack of illusions, whereas Melville's despair came from the ardour of his illusions. But to Hawthorne only did Melville lose his reserve and reveal his true nature, moods, and aims. There is no doubt that this friendship was an inspiration in the writing of *Moby Dick*; and the book was dedicated to Hawthorne. Perhaps no man could have lived up to Melville's idea of friendship, and certainly Hawthorne's icy ego made him incapable of proper response. When even Hawthorne failed to understand the greatness of *Moby Dick*, Melville was left devoid of companionship and all illusions.

In his writings after *Moby Dick*, Melville sought to scorn the world, but his genius was exhausted, and in the middle of his life he turned from the world and became interested in metaphysics, "which is but misery dissolved in thought."⁴ He avoided all associations and resisted all attempts to draw him out of his seclusion. To the critic of literature his career is "like a star that drops a line of streaming fire down the vault of the sky—and then the dark and blasted shape that sinks into the earth."⁵

Despite his debts, disappointments, and previous unhappiness, Melville was relatively happy during the creation of *Moby Dick*. In the year 1850, when he began the writing, he owed his publishers more than seven hundred dollars in advances not covered by royalties.⁶ But with the financial assistance of his father-in-law he bought a farm in Broadhall, near the village of Pittsfield. Melville called the delightful spot "Arrowhead," and there he hoped to farm a bit and to write. He was young and healthy, and the creative urge was strong. What did it matter that Elizabeth Melville was such a poor housekeeper that his sisters had to come to help, that the duties of farming were too numerous, and that profit seemed always to elude him. The house had been an inn during the eighteenth century, and seemed to be dominated by the huge chimney. An apple orchard lay to the south, fields to the north, a pasture on the west, and away in the distance, wooded hills.⁷

Visualize Melville at this time, enthusiastic about his new home, his new neighbor and friend, Hawthorne, and the beginnings of a new book. He wrote the first words with the tang of fall in the air, and as the days passed, Melville became more and more engrossed in his work. His daily chores he performed mechanically, and his thoughts seemed always to be in that second-story study. The effort was exhausting, and during the long winter months his eyes suffered severely. But with the coming of spring Melville relaxed

⁴Weaver, Raymond M., *Herman Melville, Mariner and Mystic* (New York, 1921), p. 16.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁶Mumford, Lewis, "The Writing of *Moby Dick*," *American Mercury*, XV (December 15, 1928), p. 482.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 482.

long enough to plant and sow. The book was almost ready for publication in June, and Melville found it necessary to complete the writing in New York, away from chores and family.

Concerning the background of *Moby Dick*, there is no doubt that Melville's personal experiences are found reflected there, although it is not an autobiography. The memories of his experiences aboard the *Acushnet* lend savor to his vast whaling fable. The fifteen months of hardship, bad food, tyranny of the captain, and neglect of the sick were a prelude to three years of unbelievable experiences in the South Seas after he deserted the *Acushnet* at the Marquesas Islands. Those years provide ample subject matter for other volumes about Melville, just as they provided his imagination with the impetus it needed for *Moby Dick*.

A great deal of scholarship, as well as firsthand knowledge, went into the book. With his interest in whaling supplemented by actual experience, Melville set to work to study scientific, historical, and literary authorities on the subject. It has been suggested that he drew his original theme from John Reynold's short story, "Mocha Dick or the White Whale of the Pacific," published in 1839.⁸ J. Ross Browne's *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise*, in which a voyage on a whaler is described, sketches several scenes that gave Melville suggestions for similar scenes in *Moby Dick*. The picture Browne drew of his captain may have suggested Captain Ahab, and the quarrels between Browne's captain and first mate parallel the rivalry between Captain Ahab and Starbuck. But Browne's writing was intended to be nothing more than a sober account of whaling, whereas Melville wanted to glorify the romance of whales and whaling. If Browne's writing provided suggestions, Melville's genius transformed them into the dramatic.

He found a complete history of the early days of whaling in William Scoresby's *An Account of the Arctic Regions*, dated 1820. Scoresby was an English naval officer, and his account dealt largely with the European industry. Melville expressed indebtedness also to Obed Macy's *History of Nantucket*, dated 1836.⁹ But Thomas Beale's *Natural History of the Sperm Whale* is the book that he found most useful for research. Here he found a detailed history of whaling, as well as an account of the anatomy and the natural history of the whale.¹⁰

Many critics were incredulous about the climax of *Moby Dick*—the catastrophe which concludes the book. Since Melville deserted the *Acushnet* at the Marquesas Islands, we assume that the last portion of the book was not suggested by actual experience. Melville was fascinated by Owen Chase's *Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Ship Wreck of the*

⁸Anderson, Charles R., *Melville in the South Seas* (New York, 1939), p. 37.

⁹Weaver, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

¹⁰Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

Whale Ship Essex of Nantucket, published in 1821.¹¹ Melville borrowed and heightened this account of the first known sinking of a ship by a whale. Another source of the catastrophe was Joseph Hart's *Miriam Coffin*, and from that book he also borrowed the mate's name, Starbuck.¹² It was a strange coincidence that immediately after the publication of *Moby Dick* came a newspaper story of the destruction of the whaler *Ann Alexander* by a whale, on August 20, 1851,¹³ providing evidence for skeptical critics.

These sources only served to prompt Melville's own memory and to spur his creative imagination. We see the writer poring over his copy and referring to authorities when necessary, yet the magic transformation of his comparatively meager raw material into the magnificent *Moby Dick* is enough to make it its own creation.

This creation, then, this masterpiece of English prose, represents the blending of all the best powers of Herman Melville's genius. A reading of *Moby Dick* provides a literary thrill that comes seldom in a lifetime. To some readers the thrill comes from the beauty of words and expressions found on every page. Such readers can ignore completely the symbolism and allegorical content of the book, can be only mildly interested in its whaling story, and yet can wear thin the pages of their copy to revel again and again in the sheer mastery of words and philosophical expressions. For emotional appeal Melville depended less upon his pictorial powers than upon word music. His sentences vibrate with rhythms that cannot fail to stimulate emotional response. There is no better example of this literary power than *Moby Dick*. Consider the absolute beauty in one typical quotation: "The warmly cool, clear, ringing, perfumed, overflowing, redundant days, were as crystal goblets of Persian sherbet, heaped up—flaked up, with rose-water snow. The starred and stately nights seemed haughty dames in jewelled velvets, nursing at home in lonely pride, the memory of their absent conquering Earls, the golden helmeted suns!"¹⁴

The same beauty of expression is combined with philosophy to make the best loved passages in the book. They seem to be soliloquies in the manner of asides, full of the sweetness, strength, and courage that was Melville's. In the characterization of Ahab he observes, "Old age is always wakeful; as if, the longer linked with life, the less man has to do with aught that looks like death."¹⁵ His defense of mankind is memorable: ". . . knaves, fools, and murderers there may be; men may have mean and meagre faces; but man, in the ideal, is so noble and so sparkling, such a grand and glowing creature,

¹¹Weaver, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-37.

¹²Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

¹³*Panama Herald* (Nov. 4, 1851), quoted by Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-62.

¹⁴Melville, Herman, *Moby Dick*, New York: Modern Library Publishers, 1926, p. 123.

All subsequent references to *Moby Dick* will be derived from this edition.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 123.

that over any ignominious blemish in him all his fellows should run to throw their costliest robes."¹⁶ And in a lighter scene, ". . . truly to enjoy bodily warmth, some small part of you must be cold, for there is no quality in this world that is not what it is merely by contrast. Nothing exists in itself."¹⁷

At the same time, *Moby Dick* is a classic treatment of the whaling industry and one of the great sea stories of the world's literature. Herman Melville and Richard Henry Dana were the first writers to represent the sailor in literature, and Melville's book strikes a note that no sea writer before or since has struck. Here again the casual reader may ignore the mystical in *Moby Dick* and find it engrossing as a whaling narrative packed with facts. Frank Bullen, author of *The Cruise of the Cachalot*, said that he would never have done as much research for his own book had he known about the wealth of information available in *Moby Dick*.¹⁸ It is "the fullest, the truest and the most readable history of a whaling cruise ever written."¹⁹

However, the reader searching for the real Melville in this book will not find him in the adventurous story. Melville was not writing a nautical book as much as he was making a study in human psychology. The entire story is filled with philosophy and metaphysics, and reflects Melville's apprehension of the world in relation to the Infinite. "It is the history of a soul's adventure—adventure upon the highest sphere of spiritual daring."²⁰

Almost every study of *Moby Dick* has attempted to interpret its symbols and explain its allegory. It will always be a mirror for each reader, but the most common interpretation of the story has been that the pursuit of the white whale Moby Dick by the mad Captain Ahab represents any strife between opposites—spirit against flesh, or more popularly, man against evil. Captain Ahab lost a limb in a previous chase of Moby Dick, and he is determined to destroy the whale. To the mad captain, Moby Dick is identified with all his intellectual and physical woes. The hunt goes on until the final destruction of Ahab and his ship by Moby Dick. Ahab represents the captain of the tormented soul, and his destruction produces the sadness and wisdom that is *Moby Dick*.

A more complicated interpretation finds a treasure of hidden meanings and symbols in the story, and holds that all the characters represent abstractions in a parable of man's struggle against Fate. The story then tells of Captain Ahab, who feels in himself the whole of man's sufferings and misery, and seeks to destroy the living symbol of that misery, Moby Dick.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁸Mumford, *op. cit.*, p. 486.

¹⁹*Moby Dick*, "Introduction" by Raymond Weaver.

²⁰*Ibid.*

The ship *Pequod* sails out on the ocean, symbolic of the World in Space, commanded by Ahab, man's will, ego, or soul. Starbuck and Stubb present opposites: the highest quality of spirituality and the lowest sensuality. Flask is typical of the Stoic school of philosophy. Queequeg the cannibal, Tashtego the Indian, and Daggoo the Negro personify Religion, Sin, and Ignorance. How fitting that Queequeg should serve Starbuck, that Tashtego should be Stubb's helper, and Daggoo, Flask's. At the helm of the ship is Bulkington, or Reason, guiding the world. The rest of the crew represent every virtue and vice found in the human race.²¹

Other critics have believed that *Moby Dick* symbolizes Melville's own struggle with art and life, and his disillusionment and tragedy. He was a thinker, a searcher for the true meaning of life, and it was his fate never to find himself. The strength and sadness of the book come from Melville's deep thought, and not from mere melancholy, and in that sense *Moby Dick* is Melville. Says Ishmael, "Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine."

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²¹Gleim, William S., "A Theory of *Moby Dick*," *New England Quarterly*, II (July 11, 1929), pp. 402-19.

Her Sunday Afternoon

JAYNE GROVES

Rhetoric II, Theme 13, 1943-1944

AH! GEE! SUNDAY AFTERNOON. WHATTA DAY TO RELAX. Nothin' to think about, absolutely nothin'. No filing cabinets to push and pull and cram some more into. No typewriter breaking your back. No jumping at the sound of a buzzer and smiling at that old walrus until my teeth want to fall out. "Got a couple of letters, Miss Wollanwaber." Probably a couple dozen. Holy Gee—how can one man think of so much to say and in such big words? What's he think I am—Daniel Webster? Or was it Noah? I knew once in American history. Gee, what a beautiful day to relax.

Wonder what George is doing. Probably home in some old stuffy bedroom. Except in a room like his it wouldn't ever be stuffy or too hot or too cold. I can just see George in his silk pajamas in that air-conditioned bedroom. And me out here broiling in the sun. Gees, how'd the DePews get so rich, anyway?

But with all his money George hasn't learned much about living. God, whatta drip. Was he polluted last night! And all those East Side dames looking so amused when I took him out to vomit. They'll be amused on the other side when I'm Mrs. George DePew! I'll have just as much as any one of them; then let 'em try and snub me.

I almost had him last night, but Muriel Parker had to be there. You'd think he'd have forgotten her by now. The whole town knows she's turned him down a dozen times. She thinks he's hers any time she decides to come around. Won't she be surprised when she sees me set as Mrs. of that big stone house. I almost had him last night if he hadn't passed out like a lead pipe.

If only he'd come out today. He always gets so affectionate when he sees me in a swim suit. Just like him, though, begging off with a hangover. He might as well say he isn't the athletic type and looks like the before part of a physical culture ad. He could have worn slacks and shirt like he always does.

Say, who's that young dream boy. How about that. What an eye I'm getting. Go ahead and stare, sonny. These gams have been gazed at before. Well, you don't have to be so shy. A little smile won't hurt. He scooted off like he was afraid I'd chase him. They're all so coy. Even old George.

Gee, this sun's hot. I wonder if anybody'll notice I'm not a member. The stewards probably think I belong. They've surely seen me here enough with

George the last couple of weeks. If I'd close my eyes I could almost sleep. My God, what heat.

Hey, what's going on down by the pool? Why is everyone running and yelling and back-slapping? Oh, well, probably just some gay boy just cheated the morgue jumping off the high tower. Let 'em have their fun. Their families can afford the funeral. I wonder who it was.

Why, it's George everybody's slapping. I haven't seen him get so much attention since the night he ran around the golf course in his shorts. What's he doing out?

What's that you said, dearie? "Good ole George's engaged?" Engaged? My God! Who to?

Now what did she mean, "Muriel Parker, who else?" Well, I feel for her. Imagine being married to that junior jerk! He makes love like a half-grown lobster.

"Good ole George."

My God, whatta Drip!

War Marriages

NANCY GRAY

Rhetoric II, Theme 7, 1943-1944

WAR BRINGS MANY THINGS; AMONG THEM, AND LOST in the shuffle of seemingly more important disputes, lies the problem of war marriages. Regarded briefly, this question seems a highly individual one, but when scrutinized from all angles, it becomes a problem of national significance.

Before we go on with our discussion we must ask ourselves a very pertinent question: Is it a war marriage with which we are concerned or is it a marriage which occurs during a war? A hastily arranged wedding which is the culmination of an engagement made under normal conditions can have its roots solidly enough in the ground of stability that it will flourish when conditions allow it to take up again its broken course. On the other hand, that marriage which occurs several weeks after the couple have met, when the girl has never seen her husband outside of the far-reaching restrictions placed upon him by army life and military uniforms, is the one which sends the divorce statistics soaring and which helps to fill the ranks of maladjusted youth. It is this last type of war marriage which is the root of a great many evils which last long after the direct effects of war have passed.

There is no good which can atone for the disadvantages of a fly-by-night courtship, with subsequent marriage on a three-day pass. Under these conditions there is no substance to matrimony; marriage becomes a ring on a finger. Two people who have married are not living together—an unnatural situation. It is impossible not to grow apart as a result of long periods of time spent apart. There can be no stationary home from which both step, simultaneously and together, to meet the world. One is living one type of life, while the other party to the bargain is setting off in another, sometimes entirely different direction. It is not possible to reconcile home life and army life, and in the attempt to do so, the army, for obvious reasons, will always win.

The prime objection to these hasty marriages is that they are the result of the stepped-up emotional conditions of war. People whose sensitivities, sentiments, and emotions are keyed up to such a pitch can not possibly be sure that they know exactly what they will want when the pot has stopped boiling. Some innate desire to "live" while death is happening all around us spurs us on to become a part of this thing called war; we want a vital share in what is happening. We want to live our whole lives in the space of a few months or days, never realizing that there is tomorrow, in fact, many tomorrows, to be reckoned with.

Aside from the emotional aspects of war marriages, there are practical, unalterable facts to be faced. Many of the marriages now taking place will be fulfilled on an allotment plus dependency allowance, which adds up, in a private's language, to fifty dollars a month. This is quickly used to cover the cost of living, so that it becomes necessary for the woman to work. If she is not working, it is likely that she will have to live either with her or her husband's parents. In the event that she has a baby, this involves a whole new set of disadvantages, for how is she going to support herself while she is having it, and after she does have it? She must rely either upon her or his mother, or a day nursery, to keep the child while she is busy making her living, both of which solutions are highly unsatisfactory as far as the mother, the child, and the grandparents are concerned.

A quotation from *Colliers* magazine, December 5, 1943, will suffice to give a good picture of what is happening to women who are having children at army posts and crowded communities: "According to some mysterious calculations by the Children's Bureau, 600,000 G.I. babies will be born in the next twelve months. Most G.I. mothers are between seventeen and twenty-one years old. As a very large number of the new arrivals will take place amid the medical, hospital, and housing shortages of war-boom communities, and as their daddies are privates and seamen drawing fifty dollars a month, they rate as a national problem. To cope with it, Congress has appropriated \$18,600,000 for maternity and child care for servicemen's wives, on top of

\$6,600,000 appropriated earlier. This is a very necessary thing as far as it goes, but, as shall presently be seen, appropriating a few million dollars is not the answer to everything." To quote further: "The areas around training camps and naval bases are all jammed with wives. . . . They are urged to stay home, but they don't stay home. They choke the trains. They get stranded en route or they spend their last cent on railroad tickets and arrive broke and come down on the Red Cross. . . . The Army and Navy don't want them in crowded military areas and try to discourage them, but, in this democracy, wives are civilians, and you can't stop them from going where they please."

Looking at the problem from another point of view, instead of raising morale in the ranks of the army, wives and children (by this I mean newly acquired wives and children) give a soldier more to worry about back home. It has been found by the army that married men make poorer soldiers than those who are single. Especially bad is the situation in which the wife is within easy reach and the husband is a soldier only until he reaches home and wife. Actually it has been learned from the men themselves that a sweetheart back home is as strong an influence as a wife. It is also true that a married man is inclined to take fewer risks on the battlefield than one who has no one dependent upon his life. Certainly in this respect unmarried men make better soldiers.

Psychologically it is hard for a man and his wife to understand each other thoroughly after a long time of separation. The man and the woman who hardly knew each other before their marriage may find themselves almost complete strangers after he, or they both, have returned after the war. A marriage like this has two strikes on it to begin with, as more initial adjustments than usual must be made. Women have to take into account the changes which war can evolve in a man's mind, personality, and outlook. Even as evidenced by peacetime statistics, divorce makes it easy for people not to bother to adjust, and to become permanently misunderstood by each other.

As for the pulp propaganda with which many agitators for prolific reproduction stir up the public determination to "do or die," let me say here: It is backed only by blind emotionalism which leaves a chasm of unhappiness in its wake. It is written by men who have their feet on a cloudbank.

There is, in the end, nothing to be lost by waiting until after the war to marry, and there is everything to be gained. Marriage prospers better when one can buy spinach and irons and baby carriages. The fact that over a period of time such a large percentage of quickly conceived war marriages are known to split wide open is enough to stop even those who think they are sure.

My Queen—Cleopatra!

ROBERTA SCHMALING

Rhetoric II, Theme 9, 1942-1943

I BELIEVE I KNEW CLEOPATRA BETTER THAN DID ALmost any other person on earth. As her intimate servant I was with her in the privacy of her dark moods; I stood quietly at her back and fanned her with glittering ostrich plumes and watched her in her most sparkling and vivacious role—that of presiding brilliantly as hostess at the gorgeous feasts in the Alexandrian palace; I sailed with her up the moonlit Nile in her royal barge while Caesar or Mark Anthony whispered sweet love verses to her; I bathed her after she had been out with Anthony racing down side-streets, playing childish pranks on her townspeople; I watched her playing tenderly with her babies in the palace nursery; and I alone was with her that memorable day in Alexandria when she, haggard and forlorn, calmly applied the deadly asp to her breast and fell dead at my feet.¹ Who else, then, besides Caesar and Mark Anthony, has known this queen as intimately as I?

That day, many years past, when I was first brought into her royal presence and was assigned the task of being her personal handmaid, I was struck by her beauty and grace. I remember clearly the way she looked that day, lying on her solid gold couch amid oceans of satin pillows and billowing veils. She was the picture of self-satisfaction and contentment, and I recall with a slightly guilty pang in my heart that I would gladly have given my head if I could have changed places with her for a single day. Cleopatra's Grecian features were perfect. Her low, broad forehead, arched eyebrows, long, bent lashes, full, rich lips, rounded chin, and aquiline and prominent nose—the nostrils of which were sensitive and had the appearance of good breeding—were haloed by a cloudy mass of crisped dark hair that hung in loose, shimmering waves about her shoulders. Her lovely body, which was most appealing and softly rounded, was very delicate and small. Never have I seen a face and body as perfect in all aspects as that of my beloved mistress, Cleopatra.²

As the days and weeks passed and I became accustomed to the grandeur of the palace and the extravagant, luxurious tastes of a queen whose one desire and aim in life was to be the most sensational and powerful of all queens, I came to know more of Cleopatra's character and many different

¹Weigall, Arthur, *The Life and Times of Cleopatra* (N.Y. and London, 1924) p. 17.

²*Ibid.*, p. 7.

moods. Because I was in her presence constantly, I had splendid opportunities to see her every side. She was always youthful; she had a vivacious temperament and a manner that was frequently harum-scarum. I found her to be intensely ambitious, always high-spirited and dashing.³ Mark Anthony once described her as being "as grand as a storm, lovely as lightning, cruel as pestilence, yet with a heart and passions that would make any man swoon at the thought of being able to associate with her."⁴

Cleopatra knew better than anyone how lovely and irresistible she was. At times she was so vain I felt sorry for her, but of course such beauty as hers was bound to be no secret—even to its owner. One moonlit night as I was tickling the soles of her feet with a feather (as I always did whenever she wanted to sleep),⁵ she said to me, in that voice that was her greatest weapon of all because of its wonderfully persuasive and seductive tones,⁶ "Cnarmion, I think the gods have played me a dirty trick. They should never have condemned a woman of my looks and brains and ambitions to possess but a single body. Why didn't they consult *me* before they made Cleopatra?"⁷

By believing herself to be so superior, Cleopatra lived up to the meaning of her name, "Glory of her race," and at all times she was characteristic of the long line of Macedonian rulers from which she sprang.⁸ By birth she was an Egyptian; by ancestry she was a Greek.⁹ Her father, Ptolemy V, willed his throne to Cleopatra when she was seventeen, but she was compelled to rule for awhile jointly with her younger brother, Ptolemy Dionysus. I could not help feeling sorry for her two brothers and a sister, Arsinoe, whom she caused to be murdered.¹⁰ I am afraid it has been rightly stated that at times Cleopatra was cruel and heartless. She was—but in our day and age, political murders were the custom.¹¹ Caesar and her other statesmen helped her commit these necessary murders; so Cleopatra cannot be blamed completely for them.

From the day Cleopatra made her first unusual appearance before Caesar (the day she was rolled into a long carpet and was carried over a faithful servant's shoulder in order to gain entrance to his closely guarded palace),¹² to the unfortunate day when Caesar met his fate, they were the closest of friends and lovers. Cleopatra lived with Caesar in Rome, and I must admit

³*Ibid.*, p. 10-11.

⁴Haggard, Sir H. R., *Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt* (Chicago, 189?) p. 74.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁶Weigall, *op. cit.*, p. 8-9.

⁷Schnittkind, H. T., *Cleopatra's Private Diary* (Boston, 1927) p. 299.

⁸Weigall, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁹Abbot, Jacob, *The History of Cleopatra* (New York, 1851), p. 13.

¹⁰*The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th Edition, Vol. 5 (London, 1929-1936), p. 801.

¹¹Weigall, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

¹²Wertheimer, Oscar Von, *Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt* (Philadelphia and London, 1931), p. 157.

she had that great man as tightly wound around her little finger as was possible. He was a captive to her charms and unleashed passions. As a result of their romance they had a son, Caesarion,¹³ but I did not see much of him because he was cared for in a separate part of the palace.

Cleopatra was behind Caesar in everything he attempted to do, driving him on to greater and greater achievements. She had a good sense of politics and she knew that the more powerful Caesar became the more powerful she would become.¹⁴ Cleopatra said herself that it was quite settled between them that she was a goddess and Caesar was a god. It only remained to prove it to the rest of the world.¹⁵

After Caesar's tragic death we returned to Alexandria. It was safer there, and Cleopatra was rather worried about her popularity in Rome. Shortly after our return Mark Anthony came into our lives. I say "our lives" because secretly—within my very own soul—I had a great and strange feeling for him. He was so ardent, cool, collected, and sagacious I could not help myself.¹⁶ But this story concerns Cleopatra—not an unlucky slave whose loves and sorrows should forever remain a secret. I have never witnessed a greater love than that which grew between Cleopatra and Anthony. Both of them were fashioned after the gods; both were powerful, reckless and carefree. They tried to outdo each other in preparing fabulous, luxurious, extravagant feasts. Much of their time was spent in frivolous, merry festivals and love-making.¹⁷ Cleopatra became the mother of twins and later a girl—and the two lovers were very proud of all their children.¹⁸

At times, especially when Cleopatra was lounging on her golden couch and I was either reading to her, fanning her, or tickling her feet with feathers, she would tell me stories about her life, Mark Anthony or Caesar, and her troubles at court. She also loved to talk about herself and her ideas on love. I would listen quietly, sometimes giving my own small opinions on the subject and sometimes just remaining silent. Once she confessed to me that loving only one man at a time was very boring. She believed that every woman, in order to be completely happy, should have at least one husband and two lovers.¹⁹ She wanted to ask Caesar to make it lawful—but then Caesar was no man to make any objections to a request of that nature.

¹³*The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th Edition, Vol. 5, p. 801.

¹⁴Wertheimer, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 227.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 105.

¹⁷Abbot, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

¹⁸Ludwig, Emil, *Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt* (New York, 1937) p. 205.

¹⁹Schnittkind, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

Life with Cleopatra was never dull. She always took a delight in thinking up something new and different to do. If she was bored or angry, she gave way to her feelings by punishing her slaves. Even I, her favorite hand-maid, was not sure of the ground I walked on when the Queen was displeased or unsatisfied. I can well remember the trying days when she was testing out poisons on poor, wretched prisoners in order to determine which were the least painful and the most effective.²⁰ Cleopatra feared death more than anything, except humiliation, and because she was never sure of her friends or when she might have cause to commit suicide, she wanted to be sure of knowing the easiest way to die.

Cleopatra's death was as dramatic as any part of her comparatively short life. Tears still come to my eyes when I think of my beautiful queen dead—as completely dead as any of those poor prisoners who were compelled to swallow those poisons. It happened shortly after Cleopatra and Anthony had fled from Octavian after their great fleet had been defeated in battle.²¹ Anthony thought Cleopatra had betrayed him, and we had hidden ourselves in the mausoleum. She sent him the false news that she had killed herself, and poor Anthony, believing her dead, threw himself on his sword. Never again do I wish to see such a proud and haughty queen stripped of all her self-assuredness and glamour. She was haggard and forlorn, and she became almost insane with grief over her lost love.²² It was later, after she had begun to recover from her self-inflicted delirium, that she first thought of the asp. I brought it to her in a basket of flowers, and I remember crying out to stop her as she calmly raised the tiny, writhing reptile to her breast. I was too late. Its bite was very poisonous, and it caused her immediate death.²³

I, Charmion, Cleopatra's favorite and ever-faithful servant, am now ready to follow my queen into that far land of mysteries where I shall again watch over and care for her. She is buried with Anthony in the tomb she had built for that purpose,²⁴ and they are together again in a place that is free from suffering and torture—a place where everyone is happy. But, before I go to join Cleopatra, I would like to assure you that nowhere in history will you find anyone as beautiful, gracious, vivacious, and irresistible as my own beloved queen—Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt!²⁵

²⁰Ludwig, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

²¹Abbot, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

²²Lewis, Edmonia, *The Death of Cleopatra* (Rome, 1878), Vol. I, p. 75.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 93.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 94.

²⁵It is believed that Charmion died the same day as Cleopatra, but in order to make my story complete it was necessary to change her death to a later date.

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Departure and Return

GORDON ROBERTSON

Rhetoric I, Theme 11, 1943-1944

MY FATHER IS THOROUGH. CONFIRMED COMMUTER that he is, he begins to prepare himself the night before, making resolutions as he snaps out the light. In the morning he will leap out of bed like a salmon at the first whirr of the alarm clock, he will take up his morning exercises again, he will find time to fool with the children for a moment after breakfast, and, on top of all this, he will catch an earlier train and be at his desk to greet the boys, instead of hurrying past them in the hope that they won't notice his late entry.

But when the alarm does ring, his mind is as uncontrollable as a puppy. There is no use reminding it of last night's resolutions. It won't understand. First, it must spend several minutes studying the pattern of sunlight on the ceiling. Then it checks up the time available for dressing and eating. It reviews ten years of experience and finally decides that, if corners are cut here and there, the job can be done more quickly on this particular morning. The time thus saved is spent in further study of the light on the ceiling.

Then, mysteriously, something clicks. The feet shoot out from under the bedclothes. As they touch the cold floor my father becomes a different man. He is engaged in what is technically known as Working Up Tension. His family discreetly flees at the sound of his pattering feet. For the next forty

minutes they cease to be individuals. The world revolves about the Master. All is concentrated on getting him out of the house, complete with hat, coat, and brief case. He has to be assembled like a Ford as he moves steadily from bed to train. Mistakes cannot be corrected. For he, like General Grant, cannot turn back.

My father is at his peak when, bathed, shaved, and dressed, he enters the dining room. The bread shoots into the toaster. Loving hands push food before him. Others snatch the morning paper from Mother and prop it against the artificial fruit so that he who runs may read. The orange juice is in. It's down. He crouches on the edge of his chair. His arms move with rhythmic swiftness. Bacon, eggs, toast, coffee. No jamming. No crowding. He is master of the situation. To Mother he recalls all the things she forgot to do yesterday. He addresses the eggy little faces grouped about him on the subject of their report cards. He has come to the end of his patience with them.

The climax is at hand. He looks at his watch, and with a hounded cry rushes from the room.

I can remember when people didn't "catch" trains. They "took" them. In those days arriving at the station had some dignity to it. When my father went somewhere, the whole family arrived at the station a good half hour early to see him off.

What a change! When Mother takes Father to the train today she doesn't even come to a full stop. She hasn't time or we children will be late to school.

At no time does my father feel sorrier for himself than when he comes home at night and finds that the car is not at the platform to meet him. Other cars crowd the station plaza, fill up, and gaily chug away. But the familiar red sedan with the bent fender is nowhere to be seen. He has finished work at the office early in order to catch this train (he has spent the last half hour there talking to Brown about his arthritis) and has planned to have extra time with his children before dinner. Yet his wife, undoubtedly, is now sitting in some frivolous group, talking and laughing, forgetful of his very existence.

And now, when things are at their blackest, the little woman—having prepared the youngest children's spinach, forced it down their throats with the handle of a knife, sorted the laundry, and called for my father's dress pants at the tailor's—comes skidding up to the platform. Father is face to face with his greatest test of character. If he can smile at times like these, then he is a man indeed.

He smiles.

Meteorite!

JOHN T. WELLS

Navy English E1, Theme 7, 1943

DURING THE ENTIRE NINETEENTH CENTURY, SCIENTIFIC men gave little credence to stories about falling stones, which we know as meteors. A change in opinion on the part of intelligent men, which took place at the beginning of the twentieth century, was due to an investigation by the French Academy of the shower of stones which fell at L'Aisle in 1803. This investigation established so absolutely the fact that the stones had fallen from outer space that scientific men were logically compelled to give credence to similar reports of occurrences elsewhere. Papers published at the same time by Science Society strongly urging that other masses reported to have fallen upon the earth could not, because of their structure and composition, be of terrestrial origin, had much to do with fixing the growing faith that solid cosmic matter, not of terrestrial origin, does at intervals come to the earth. Since this beginning the study of meteorites has been one of constantly widening interest and purport.¹

With this awakening interest in meteors, there came a need for a method of locating the stones, in order that their composition might be studied. Dr. Cant Johans invented his magnetic needle in this period to fulfill this need.² Tiny meteorites, "Pebbles from Heaven," weighing less than a 300th of an ounce, have been discovered in Arizona by the use of the magnetic needle. Some of these stones have been found as much as twelve feet under ground.³

Several years later, after falls of stones began to be carefully recorded and investigated, it was found that a phenomenon was happening which defied explanation by existing theories concerning matter. Some meteors apparently smite the earth, then vanish without a trace. It was argued at the Society for Research on Meteorites at Lowell Observatory, Arizona, that there is such a thing as reverse matter, in which the nucleus of the atom is made up of negative electrons, with protons circling this nucleus, whereas terrestrial matter has protons in its atomic nucleus.⁴ If a contraterrene meteorite wandered into the solar system and met up with terrene material, the respective sub-atomic charges would cancel out in a great spurt of energy

¹Farrington, Oliver C., *A Century of the Study of Meteorites* (Philadelphia, 1864), p. 202.

²Johans, Dr. Cant, "Magnetic Needle Speeds Discovery of Meteors," *Science News Letter*, XLI-XLII (1943), p. 265.

³*Ibid.*, p. 265.

⁴"Theories," *Time*, XXXVIII (June 17, 1941), p. 52.

and both kinds of matter would vanish into nothing. This would explain why Soviet scientists with elaborate geophysical equipment could find no fragments of the great meteorite which smacked central Siberia in 1908, although similar researches around Canyon Diablo, Arizona, were successful. The Siberian meteorite was perhaps contraterrene, the Arizona fall of earth-like matter.⁵

When it was found that these stones actually disappeared, science was left with no way of determining exactly how frequently the earth was bombarded from space. However, a radio man, interested in meteors, connected strange sounds, which he called "swan songs," with the falling of meteors near his station. The longest of these shooting star "swan songs" heard in India lasted only three seconds—about the time required for a big meteor to penetrate the upper atmosphere and burn itself out. Most occurred in the dark of early morning, when meteors are most numerous. Others sounded off in daytime, when the stars themselves are invisible. This suggests that astronomers, heretofore hampered by clouds and daylight in counting meteor showers, may now set up permanent radio recorders to count off the falling stars automatically.⁶

The more interesting side of the study of meteorites is that which deals with the amount of damage done by these fiery rocks. There is a bowl sunk in the Arizona desert so huge that if it were the football stadium it resembles, even to the upflung brim, everyone in Chicago could crowd into it. Its diameters average from 1,400 feet to 4,000 feet, and it is 600 feet deep, less than half its original depth. This, the great Barringer meteorite pit, near Winslow, is the largest crater resulting from the siege out of the skies that has gone on against the earth ever since the creation. The pit was dug from 20,000 to 50,000 years ago by an explosive force outmatching that of TNT. It gained its energy when moving at truly cosmic velocities attainable only under interplanetary conditions from the explosive latent energy that exists even in ordinary rock and metal. All the bombs dropped in this war, if welded into one mighty aerial torpedo, could not match the power of the great bomb from space that dug this crater. The explosion might well have been heard around the world.⁷

Don't ever be fooled by the know-it-all who tells you that meteors never strike living things. A little careful consideration will readily explain why injury from falling meteorites is rare. The state of Kansas, with an area of more than 81,000 square miles, has a population of about 1,750,000, which allows an area of 29 acres for each individual in the state. Allowing several times the number of meteors which the records would warrant, we would

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁶"Meteor's Swan Song," *Newsweek*, XIX (June 29, 1942), p. 60.

⁷Nininger, H. H. and Fleming, Roscoe, "Meteorite!", *Colliers* (December 11, 1943), p. 18.

still expect only one casualty in several thousand years in the state; while in the whole United States there should regularly pass several generations without death from the fall of meteorites. Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that catastrophes involving human life will sometimes occur from this cause.⁸ In a little shower in India, there were included in the area of the fall three villages. A fourteen pound stone of the Johnston, Colorado, fall of July 6, 1942, fell in the highway over which a funeral procession had just passed on its way to the cemetery. The entire gathering witnessed the event.⁹

Meteorites have played a most important part in our daily lives. Some scientists conjecture that the angle at which the earth is tilted to the elliptic, with our consequent procession of seasons, may be due to a truly large meteorite, a runaway planetoid of many millions of tons, crashing into our planet aeons ago at such an angle as to tilt the earth in its orbit.¹⁰

The fall of a meteorite large enough to ruin half a continent, kill millions of people, and profoundly alter conditions of living all over the world is possible, though scarcely probable, at any moment. Even the fall of a meteorite as large as a locomotive or an automobile is one of the most awe-inspiring natural phenomena.¹¹ It is not likely ever to happen—but, if the Siberian fall had occurred six hours later, instead of striking the turning earth in the Siberian wastes, it would have landed squarely in densely populated western Europe.¹²

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¹⁰Nininger and Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 53.

Questions Minus Answers

DOROTHY KELLEY

Rhetoric I, Final Examination, 1943-1944

I WISH I HAD AN ANSWER TO THE MANY QUESTIONS that have been running through my mind ever since I have been old enough to have thoughts—questions that will not be answered during my lifetime or during the many lifetimes to come—perhaps never—questions that may never be answered for man until his death and his reaching The Great Beyond.

This brings to mind my first questions, the questions that always leave me with a sense of frustration after I have thought of them. Is there a heaven? Is there a hell? Is there a purgatory? What does happen after death? Longfellow says, "Dust thou art, to dust returneth." Is this true? Does man's body rot away in the soil which has nourished it? Does he really have a soul? Or is man merely a body with an inventive mind? Perhaps he has a mind that invents heaven and hell and purgatory. I don't know the answer. I don't know whether man invented them or whether God said they were there.

But is there really a God? I've always thought there must be a God—a Higher Power. It is impossible to look at the stars, the grass, a tiny baby, without believing in God. Yet it is easy to get into a classroom, a classroom in which a lecture on evolution is being given, and not believe in Him. It's very simple to say that the earth was a chunk of the sun, simple to say that life began with simple bacteria and one-cell animals and progressed through fishes, amphibians, mammals, primates, to man. Yes, it is easy. Yet consider these two facts: Science cannot tell us who made the sun; science cannot make life today. If the origin of life was so simple, why can't science make a cell live? The apparent answer is that only God can make life.

If God makes life, does he make it only for this earth? Is there life someplace else in this universe? Is there life in another universe? If there is, is it life as we know it? Or is it some kind of life that man cannot possibly conceive? Maybe there are people, just like us, on other planets. Maybe there is a planet of all black people and one of all yellow people and maybe even one of purple people. After all, who knows? I wonder how it would feel to live on a planet five times as big as ours—a planet where the days are five times as long as our days and the nights five times as long as our nights.

And if there are a heaven and a hell, would these people go to the same one we would? But maybe they don't have a heaven and a hell; maybe they live forever.

Perhaps we live forever, too. There are people in the world who believe in reincarnation. There are many good arguments for that theory. "It seems to me I've been here before" and "I know that man" are common expressions. The scientist says, "You've seen a picture of that place" or "You met that man when you were a child; you just don't remember it." But have you seen a picture of that place? Have you met that man before? No one really knows.

No one knows anything. Anyone can make logical guesses, but no one knows. Proof has been offered that there are a heaven, a hell, a purgatory. But just as much proof has been given to the contrary.

It is very difficult to know what to believe. I wish I had an answer to each of my questions. But since I have no answers, I will try to believe in God and His word. Perhaps, if there is a heaven, I will go to it some day and all of my questions will be answered.

The Fourth Hour

ARNOLD RUSTIN

A.S.T. English 111b, Theme 2, 1943

I STILL SHUDDER WHEN I RECALL SOME OF MY PAST experiences as a Flying Cadet, but of all these memories the most frightening is the recollection of my first attempt at acrobatics. I had already had three hours of flying in the Stearman Primary Trainer, and although apprehensive, was enjoying the new sensations that flying offered. During these three hours I had learned to fly straight and level and to execute left and right turns—nothing more.

The Stearman, also known as the *P.T. 17*, is a tandem two-seater, two hundred horsepower biplane with open cockpits. The instructor sits in the front seat; the student sits in the rear. The only method of vocal communication is by gosport tube, a hollow rubber pipe from the front cockpit to the student's ear. This device is strictly for one way conversations, and unintelligible ones at that. The instructor blabbers through the tube; and since the student can neither answer back nor understand what is being said, he smiles affably and nods in gracious assent. Regardless of what is said, whether understood or not, it is customary for the cadet to smile and nod. The only other method of communication is by hand-signs. When the instructor taps his head, it means he is taking over the controls; when he puts both hands above his head, it means he no longer has the controls, and that the student should take over.

I recall my first attempt at acrobatics very vividly. I dogged my instructor, Mr. Kalb, on the way to our blue and yellow Stearman, clambered into the rear cockpit, squeezed into my seat, and fastened my safety belt. I felt oppressively full from a heavy dinner of corned beef and cabbage and reluctantly pulled the belt to its last notch.

Mr. Kalb started the engine, taxied out to the runway, and took off. When we had cleared the traffic pattern, he put his hands above his head and held up five fingers. I nodded, smiled agreeably of course, took over the controls, and gracefully spiraled upward to five thousand feet. I leveled off—that is, came to an even keel—and cut the throttle, cut down on the supply of gas to the engine, and awaited instructions.

Mr. Kalb picked up the tube and *Blah Blahed* into it. I smiled. *Blah-Blah*—more smiles. “*Blah . . . we will now try a stall . . . Blah.*”

“Mmmm,” I said to myself, “a *stall*. I had something about that in my Theory of Flight class. . . . Let’s see now. . . . A heavier-than-air plane flies because of its forward motion. The shape of the wing causes the air to rush across the top surface of the wing faster than it does across the bottom. This gives rise to a greater air pressure on the lower side of the wing, and this pressure difference, *the lift*, is the force that keeps the plane in the air. Now—Lemme see—Oh yes. . . . When you slow down the forward motion too much, the wings lose their lift and the plane literally falls straight out of the air. When the plane picks up flying speed again, because of its rapid fall, it can be leveled off and will again fly. . . . Jeez, Arnie, ol’ boy, ol’ boy, that’s pretty damn good! Straight from the book if I do say so myself. . . . *Oy Vay!* This safety belt’s killing me. I gotta undo it. . . . Ah, that’s better!”

In the midst of my pleasant rendezvous with theory, Kalb cut the throttle completely. The engine coughed, sputtered, gave a few spits, and then was quiet. Such silence! It was absolutely quiet up there without a roaring engine. I felt the stick coming back, back, way back into my “gut.” The ship’s nose started to point up—higher and higher. The wind sighed through the struts, the sunlight danced on the wings, and all was peaceful and calm and serene.

Then, without warning, something gave way. The plane just left me dangling in mid-air. I felt myself falling. There was no seat under me. An acrid taste of pre-digested corned beef and cabbage filled my mouth. I gasped as the breath was yanked from my lungs. The stick went gradually forward, the engine began to roar again, and the plane headed straight down toward earth. Now the taste became a reality as flecks of corned beef and cabbage filled my mouth. The stick was eased back to the neutral position, the plane described a gentle arc, and came out of the stall at four thousand feet.

The instructor held his hands above his head: “You try it now . . . ship’s all yours. . . . ”

As soon as I got the gist of the message, I threw my hands above my head too! He *may not* have wanted the controls: I certainly *did not* want them. So there we were, four thousand feet above the ground in a pilotless plane. The two alleged pilots were playing a game of sorts, for each man had his hands above his head! A very funny sight indeed.

Being on the losing side, I put my hands on the stick, gulped, took a deep breath, and cut the throttle. Nervously, I yanked the stick back, and the ship almost plopped over backward as she stood on her tail. As my P.T. lost flying speed, she shuddered like a wet dog and vibrated from end to end. Then, without warning, she fell like a rock. This time I was jerked bodily out of my seat and I wildly clutched for my dangling safety belt. The blood drained out of my head and my intestinal contents rushed up to fill the vacuum. In sheer desperation, I shoved the stick forward. The Stearman tilted forward—paused to search for the best spot to hit on the earth—then plummeted downward to a cross formed by two roads.

I kicked the right rudder pedal and the P.T. readily retaliated by going into a spiral spin. At this point my intestinal contents became disgusted with my empty head and decided to quit my body. Dinner, breakfast, last night's snack all made one grand spiral exit, only to be hurled back into my face by the raging wind.

In sheer agony I fell back into my seat, bringing the stick back with me. The Stearman shuddered and groaned, struggled against this new force, gave one last desperate heave and leveled out by itself.

I opened my eyes and Lo! I had completed my first stall, and all by myself—and my Stearman—and God's luck. The instructor tapped his head and took the ship back home.

Shinglebelly

I'll never forget one game he played. Midway in the first half, the coach sent him in. Before the period ended, the opponents had scored two touchdowns, both of them right over Shinglebelly. Some one would knock him off his "props," and he'd lie on the ground like a six-months old kid who hadn't learned to walk. The coach gave him hell at the half. "Shingle," he said, "I'm going to start you again, but by God, if you don't get the first tackle you'll be sitting on the bench, *permanently*."

Shingle went down the field like a "bat out of hell," and he hit that guy with the force of superman. Shingle's nose was a mass of bloody flesh. The other guy? He was discharged last week.

Next, Bob went out for track. Every morning just after the fast mail had whizzed through town, Shinglebelly started jogging down the road-bed. He'd go five or six miles while the other runners were still between the sheets. He never won a race in his life. In one meet, there were twelve starters. Shinglebelly got tenth place. Afterwards he remarked, "Boy, did I run those two guys into the ground."—HOWARD E. SHUMAN

My Town Speaks

BERNARD MILLER

Rhetoric II, Theme 1, 1943-1944

MY HOME TOWN IS A VILLAGE OF 2700 PEOPLE. IT IS divided into three sections—Maryland Place, the “exclusive part of town”; Community Heights, which geographically belongs to another town and politically controls our entire village; and “The Corner.” “The Corner” is the intersection of two highways with four parallel railroad tracks passing near by. The people of “The Corner” are a motley lot. At the intersection and for a few blocks each way, are old frame houses about to fall apart and just such people as would live in such homes without ever repairing them. There are farmers from Tennessee who are now getting “big money” in the near-by mills; there are old settlers who have lived in squalor and dirt for the past fifteen years. There are *some* very clean people—simple and hard working. All have a speech which reflects hill-billy radio programs, their old Kentucky homes, and rural Illinois. All sharply contrast with the people who live a few blocks away from the corner. These latter are the real founders of Nameoki: they are the society seekers, the literature lovers, the collectors of old china and classical records. They are the pseudo-society of a small Illinois village.

“You hadn’t ought to do that,” one of the corner people said to me the other day. I squirmed. But I kept “listening at” the local garage owner explaining to a young woman that his wife would not care if they went out “a tootin’” that night. After all, she stayed at home “most every night anyways” and did not worry about his “goings on.” However, a corner girl who knows the wife very well told me that he was “liable for a good bawling out,” for “his wife had saw him and she is nigh on to blowin’ a fuse cause she didn’t get to go with him instead of someone else.” They do not all speak quite so badly. Or perhaps they do, and their southern drawl covers it up. The younger generation has the typically limited American vocabulary which uses “swell” for all things good, “fine” for all things above average, “fix” for “repair,” and “funny” for “strange” (together with a “bang up good cussin’ way” when they really feel expressive). The back hills ballads slip in, too. I know I have heard a few “thee’s” and “thy’s” and one man always “went ’neath his ahtemoble” when the “blasted gas line busted”—which happened frequently.

Then there is the aristocracy of our little village. Three blocks away from the intersection the mode of life and way of speaking change completely. Three blocks from “The Corner” are people who pretend to be what they are not. Their speech reflects the pretense. It is correct, but it is also jargon.

They choose the long way to explain an idea, and if that does not convey the proper impression, they use an extremely ordinary word. But that does not describe them. Perhaps this will help: I can always picture the "socialite" of the town babbling and sighing excitedly over an odd piece of old glassware and begging my mother to agree with her. "But, Mary, isn't that just so-o-o-o-o very, *very* tantalizing? I shall have it—have it this very minute!"

Gee, do I talk that way?

The Laughter of the Water

DOROTHY KNAPHURST

Rhetoric II, Theme 12, 1943-1944

BILLOWY BAGS OF DOWN FLOATED IN A MASS OF filmy blue. The cries of soaring birds were like a lullaby accompanied by the deep rhythm of the waves upon the shore. The warm sand was a gentle, soft hand rubbing over me. Here and there a shining bug crawled over the sand in a slow, methodical way. All was peace and contentment.

Down the beach a small knot of people stood around the shell of a man. It seemed as if with their deep breathing they were trying to put life back into what was dead, but they were not God to breathe the breath of life into the nostrils of man. Wearily and heavily they lifted up the body and plodded down the beach.

All that remained was a depression in the sand and a mass of messy footprints around it. A little further down the beach there was a gay happy set of prancing prints leading to the water. They didn't come out—the only thing that returned was a long mark where a body had been dragged out and the depression it left in the sand. The ocean let out a wild, joyful call as if the desire for blood had just been whetted and must be satisfied. What did it matter to that unfeeling mass of terror that a man from Nashville with a wife and two children had come to it a living thing and gone out—lifeless.

The clouds no longer seemed like down but rather like whitecaps in the sky of water rushing me under. The sand was no longer gentle, but a luring, pulling thing trying to drag me to the water and doom. The boom became louder, the laugh shriller and more horrible. I ran, ran as fast as I could down the beach, anything to get away, to escape the murderous enemy that surrounded me. As my breath left me, it seemed to create pressure that pushed back the terrible atmosphere that clutched at me.

A peculiar fascination for the water came over me as I sat in the sand trying to gain the breath I had lost in the wild flight down the beach. The sea was a magnet, gently whispering, "Come, come to me and let me soothe you. I am not evil; it was all an illusion. I am gentle and calm and beautiful." The force became almost irresistible.

Farther away a child ran out on the beach and skipped over the waves at the water's edge. I wanted to scream to it, not to go into the water, to turn and run the other way as fast as its legs could carry it. The words formed in my mouth noiselessly as I watched the child plunge exuberantly into the waves. The seconds hung in the air, waiting. A scream tore the air. Oh, God, no! The child ran out happy and unharmed.

I sat down, shaking with laughter. The whole feeling was silly, foolish. The terror that possessed me gone, I dove head first into the waves. All noise stopped suddenly. There was a downward pulling. I was going down to the middle of the earth. I struggled upward—must get air, must get up. Then, as suddenly as I had gone down, I was up thrashing my arms at nothing but the salt air. A great wave came along and threw me carelessly up on the beach, laughing as if to say, "Don't worry. I don't want you *this* time." I ran from the beach, from the water, into the land where there was no water, into the arms of safety.

Spring

Private RICHARD ROGERS

A.S.T. English 111a, Theme 11, Summer, 1943

WINTER HAD RUSHED UPON THE UNSUSPECTING earth with all of its ancient fury. The dead, yellow grass was half covered with a light sprinkle of snow and the leaves were blown into corners and piled high against fences, where they sought refuge from the restless wind. Trees stood out darkly against the gray winter-sky, stark and naked, stripped of their luxuriant summer covering.

The fields, too, were bare and lifeless looking; their crops had long since been harvested and the fields had been plowed—they were now monotonous in their earthiness. Their year's labor had been done, and they were sleeping undisturbed under a light mantle of snow.

Few geese flew overhead now, the main flocks having already passed over on their way to the South. For weeks they had flown by, their wild melodies drifting down to the frozen land below, their long vee's making fleeting shadows against the cold, white moon.

Around the farm, activity had dwindled to a mere routine of necessary

chores, mending harness, feeding and watering the stock, and repairing implements for the next year. The arduous task of sawing and chopping the winter's supply of wood had been virtually completed.

A long succession of weary, cold months would pass before the hardships of winter would be over. Many discouragements would be met and endured, and at times, the whole depressing weight of the long, cold winter would be severely felt, and the weeks would stretch out interminably.

But the winter would eventually lose its grip in the face of the sun as it advanced northward. The frigid, depressing banks of ice and snow, those silent grim enemies through the long winter, would pass, and they would make possible the rushing, boisterous spring brooks. The fields that had lain so long, silent and fallow, would be covered with a delicate coat of new spring grass. As the days advanced, the multitudes of birds would return from their winter homes, bringing with them gay colors and softly sung tales of the regions to the south. Wild flowers would appear, hesitantly at first, springing up in only the most sheltered, sunny valleys. Then, gaining courage, they would arise all through the woodlands, adding their own incomparable charm to the beauty of the awakened countryside. The long, cold winter would now be forgotten, and the land would stir under the urgings of spring.

War is a lot like that. It is long and harsh, and may, at times, seem almost unbearable. Gone are many of the beauties and comforts of peace. Hardships and sufferings prevail, and the land is gripped in a merciless, mailed fist. But if we lose faith, or become disheartened, we should remember that war may be favorably compared to the season of winter. Both are harsh and unhappy periods; suffering and grief are common in each. But war, too, like winter, has a spring. It is the spring of peace, a time of joy and happiness once more. The sun of freedom shines strongly again, and with good effect. The boys come marching home, singing strange, melodic ballads of lands far away. The good things of normalcy spring up again, and universal happiness replaces universal woe.

A Night at Aimee's

Our party approached Aimee's temple at about eight in the evening and I was startled by its size, and by the lights covering it like jewels on a dowager at the Met's opening night. The temple's roof was crowned by a huge red Star of David blinking on and off without rest, while immediately under it was another blinking neon sign announcing to the faithful, in no uncertain terms, that "Jesus Saves." Finally, beneath this was a huge marquee, surely as large as any that hangs in front of our largest theaters, upon which were the names of the speakers and the time the services were conducted in the temple. The marquee read that night, "Tonight. See, Hear, Brother Burpo in person." No, I'm not trying to fool you. The speaker for that night *was* named Brother Burpo, and, believe me, he was proud of it, for Burpo called himself by name every occasion he had to do so.

—ERLE KORSHAK

104 Library

One who reads the literary reviews and supplements these days is likely to notice the unusually large number of biographies appearing from week to week. Certainly the war has stimulated, rather than stifled, this particular kind of literary effort. Interesting people are always to be found where great events take place; and professional writers are quick to sense public curiosity about the men behind the official communique or the syndicated dispatch. We feel, most of us more sharply than ever before, that right now our daily newspapers are crammed with the stuff that will fill another generation's history books. Our curiosity about the people behind the names and titles sprinkled throughout these newspaper columns suggests that we, like Carlyle, know that at least one kind of history contains the essence of innumerable biographies.

By no means all of the present flood of biographical writing, however, is concerned with men famous because of the war. There are dozens of these works, of course—many of them excellent. They range all the way from the story of Ghandi to a life of Churchill; from Mussolini's autobiography to that of Harold Ickes. Even fresh works on such classic subjects as Napoleon and Bolivar turn up among these studies of our contemporaries. But if you're weary of campaigns and such activities, you have a host of other subjects from which to choose. A delightfully clever and racy life of John Barrymore should be on our shelves any day now. There's more of clever anecdote and pointed wit in this one than the "literary" flavor of its title, *Good Night, Sweet Prince*, might suggest. Or, if you enjoyed the hilarity of the Misses Skinner and Kimbrough when their hearts were young and gay, why not follow them to Hollywood? You'll find this sequel to *Our Hearts* listed under Miss Kimbrough's name. If you haven't already done so, you may enjoy reading Eve Curie's life of her mother; it's usually interesting to see what the movie craftsmen are able to do with a biography you've read. And for those who have a special interest in the familiar essay or in literature in general, the library has ordered copies of an excellent new life of Max Beerbohm.

As we promised in the last issue, we shan't attempt to review books here, but to point out some you might like to know about. Glance over the list of several recent biographies listed below. Better still, poke around among those in 104 Library.

ANDREWS, ROY CHAPMAN, *Under a Lucky Star*
PERCY, WM. ALEXANDER, *Lanterns on the Levee*
HATHAWAY, KATHERINE B., *The Little Locksmith*
FERGUSON, DELANCEY, *Mark Twain*
SANTAYANA, GEORGE, *Persons and Places*

It has occurred to the Book Committee that one class of reader may feel that the reading requirement is unfair. Where are the whodunits, the master sleuths anticipating the fourth murder of the evening, the explorers of the weird and the gruesome, the zombie? The Committee has no intention of furnishing a paradise of horrors—but does wish to point to a few books which might hold you away from the Inner Sanctum or The Hermit broadcasts. Some of them you will find listed below. Although not all are detective novels, horror stories, or mysteries, they do all play with that sort of material. Pick one and shiver—or toss it aside and try another.

WENSLEY, FREDERICK PORTER—*Forty Years in Scotland Yard*
 SEABROOK, WM.—*Magic Island*
 SEABROOK, WM.—*Witchcraft*
 DUMAURIER, DAPHNE—*Jamaica Inn*
 DUMAURIER, DAPHNE—*Rebecca*
 HIGHER, HELEN (McInnis)—*Above Suspicion*
 HOUSEHOLD, GEOFFREY—*Rogue Male*
 LAGERLOF, SELMA—*Ring of the Lowenshold*
 PRIESTLEY, J. B.—*Blackout in Gretley*
 SAYERS, DOROTHY—*Nine Tailors*
 SHEARING, JOSEPH—*Golden Violet*
 TIMMON, GEORGE—*Patience of Margaret*
 STEVENSON, ROBERT LOUIS—*Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*
 WHARTON, EDITH—*Ghosts*
 BALDERSTON, JOHN LLOYD—*Berkeley Square*
 FERRIS, WALTER—*Death Takes a Holiday*
 VANE, SUTTON—*Outward Bound*
 BRYAN, GEORGE S.—*Spy in America*
 PHILPOTTS, EDEN—*Grey Room*

Rhet as Writ

My father played semi-professional baseball, when I was a foundling.

. . . .

TNT is most commonly used in defensive warfare, such as the demolition of brides [bridges].

. . . .

It is the responsibility of all American citizens to help build the world of peace that we are destroying to preserve.

. . . .

My brother has just returned from three years of overseas duty, and is convalescing from wounds he received in battle at home.

Honorable Mention

Betty Cordes—*Turkey: Yesterday and Today*

Norma Diedrich—*On the Appreciation of Dixieland Jazz*

Delores Goepfert—*I No Longer Like to Hunt*

Ernest Hepp—*Tobacco Auctioneer*

Harry Kantor—*The Life and Works of Robert Briffault*

Marjory Nuttall—*Maxim Gorky*

Joyce Osborne—*Don't Call It "Shell Shock"*

Private Martin Skarka—*My Daughter, Karen Ann*

Private Frank B. Sollows—*One Value of a College Education*

Joseph M. Williamson—*Ageless Miracle*



